GUEST PARTICIPANTS

NORMAN MAILER became interested in writing while a freshman at Harvard, and in 1941 his "The Greatest Thing in the World" won the *Story Magazine* college contest.

He graduated from Harvard in 1943 and wrote his first novel during an 8-month wait for the beginning of his Army service. *A Transit to Narcissus* was not published. Within the fifteen months following his discharge from the service in 1946, he wrote the war novel *The Naked and the Dead*.

His second major novel, *Barbary Shore*, was published in 1951 and was followed in 1955 by *The Deer Park*.

Advertisements for Myself, a collection of short works by Mr. Mailer, was published recently. It consists of short stories, articles, essays, short novels, and other forms woven together by an autobiographical narrative.

Norman Mailer

RALPH ELLISON has a rich and varied occupational history. He has been a shoeshine boy, newsboy, waiter, hobo, dental laboratory apprentice, receptionist, clerk, professional photographer, jazz musician, and writer. Short stories, reviews, criticisms, and articles by Mr. Ellison have appeared in literary magazines, and his novel, *Invisible Man*, was published in 1952. It was a great critical success and received the National Book Award in 1953.

In 1955 Mr. Ellison won the Prix de Rome and lived in Rome for two years. Since 1958 he has been visiting lecturer in English at Bard College.

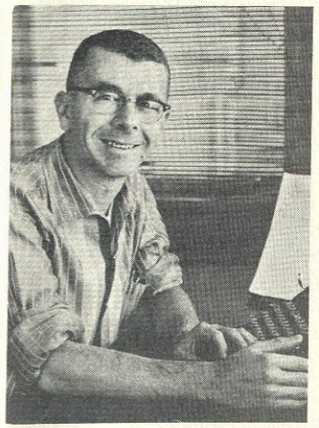
He is presently working on his second novel, as yet untitled. Part of the work will appear in *The Noble Savage*, a new magazine which will begin publication in January.

Ralph Ellison

MARK HARRIS is a novelist who has been a newspaper reporter and college teacher. He is presently on the faculty of the Language Arts Division at San Francisco State College. One of the most talented of the younger novelists in America, he has written stories about soldiers and ballplayers, and an impressionistic biography of Vachel Lindsay, *City of Discontent* (1952).

Trumpet to the World, a story of interracial marriage, was written in 1946. The first of the novels about Henry Wiggen, the young pitcher on the New York Mammoths baseball team, appeared in 1953 with the publishing of *The Southpaw*. The subject was continued in *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1956) and *A Ticket for a Seamstitch* (1957). *Something About a Soldier* (1957) concerned a soldier who became a conscientious objector.

Mr. Harris' latest novel, *Wake Up, Stupid*, is a satiric revelation of modern man.



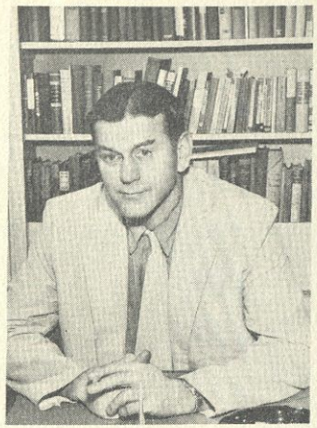
Mark Harris

DWIGHT MACDONALD has devoted most of his time to magazine work. He has been a staff writer on *Fortune;* an editor of *Partisan Review;* and the editor, publisher, and chief contributor to *Politics*. Since 1951 he has been a regular staff writer for *The New Yorker*. During 1956-1957, he spent a year in England as advisory editor on *Encounter Magazine*, a London monthly.

Mr. MacDonald has written four books—*Henry Wallace, The Man and the Myth; The Root is Man; The Ford Foundation, the Men and the Millions*; and his latest, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, published in 1957.

He is currently preparing a book on mass culture and is also putting together a general anthology of literary parodies.

Dwight MacDonald



Paul Engle

Writers Workshop

The Writers' Workshop at the State University of Iowa was established 22 years ago. It was based on the theory that a closer relationship between the university and the writer, between the scholar and the artist, would benefit both. The Workshop was to provide a place where the creative writer with talent could be stimulated by example and expert criticism, and by the intellectual riches of the university. The product, it was hoped, would be the professional writer who often was a teacher of writing in other colleges and universities.

Under the leadership of Paul Engle, the Iowa Workshop has had outstanding success with the idea of a "community of writers" in a university setting. Through the more than two decades of its history, the Workshop has attracted talented young poets and writers of fiction. Under the critical guidance of instructors who are writers themselves, and through the influence and criticisms of their fellow student-authors, they improve more rapidly than would ordinarily be expected and many soon are being published in both literary and popular magazines.

The State University of Iowa gives both the Master of Fine Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in writing, and creative efforts are accepted for thesis credit.

Arnold Gingrich

ARNOLD GINGRICH, the publisher and founding editor of *Esquire*, will moderate one session of the symposium. Mr. Gingrich became the magazine's editor at the age of 29, holding the position from 1933, the first year of publication, through 1945.

These years encompassed the period of the magazine's greatest growth. During that time he was also editor of *Coronet* and *Apparel Arts* (now *Gentlemen's Quarterly*), both published by Esquire, Inc. At the close of World War II he moved to Switzerland where he was European editor of *Esquire* and *Coronet*. He resumed the editorial direction of *Esquire* in 1952, with the title of publisher.

Mr. Gingrich has played an active role in encouraging and publishing outstanding American and European writers over the past 25 years, and is recognized as one of this country's leading editors.

The public is welcome.
No tickets or admission fee required.

the position of the writer in America today

THE WRITER IN A MASS CULTURE

a symposium

December 4-5, 1959
State University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Sponsored by

Esquire Magazine
State University of Iowa

This is the second symposium on the condition of the writer in America to be sponsored by Esquire. The first was held at Columbia University in New York City in 1958.

The general theme of this year's symposium will be "The Writer in a Mass Culture." Four distinct statements of the problem will be made by four writers actively engaged in publishing their work in magazines and books. They are all widely-published writers who have faced the constant issues of art and the marketplace.

Ralph Ellison

was born in 1914 in Oklahoma City and grew up there. A state scholarship took him to Tuskegee Institute, where he majored in music, his instrument being the trumpet; and he also studied composition with Ludwig Hegestreit. In 1936 he left for New York City to study sculpture, but soon gave up plastic art to take music composition from Wallingford Reigger; and finally he forsook music for writing when he participated in the New York City Writer's Project. Since 1939, his work has been published in many magazines. His novel *Invisible Man* appeared in 1952 and received the National Book Award the following year. Since then he has lectured in Austria at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies, taken a Prix de Rome, and, for two years past, been a lecturer in English at Bard College. He is now at work on a novel, still untitled, a part of which will appear in *The Noble Savage*, a new magazine that is to begin publication next January.

Paul Engle

was born at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1908. After graduation from Coe College, he took an M. A. at the State University of Iowa, his thesis being his first book of poems, *Worn Earth*, winner of the Yale Younger Poets prize in 1932. The next year he went as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford, where he took the B. A. and M. A. Then he returned to Iowa and was made head of the University Writers Workshop, which he has directed ever since. Besides many articles and much criticism, he has published one novel, *Always the Land* (1941), and nine books of verse, the latest of which is *Poems in Praise* (1959). He has been co-editor of the O. Henry Memorial annuals and a judge for the National Book Awards, has lectured widely, taught at Harvard College and Louisiana State University, and held a Ford grant and a Guggenheim fellowship. Poems by him have been set by the composer Philip Bezanson in two song cycles, a cantata, and an opera, *Western Child* (premiere 1959).

Arnold Gingrich

was born at Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1903. In 1925, he graduated from the University of Michigan, a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Sigma Kappa. At the age of 29 he became *Esquire*'s founding editor, which position he held from 1933 through 1945, the period of the magazine's greatest growth. During that time he also edited *Coronet* and *Apparel Arts* (now *Gentlemen's Quarterly*), both published by Esquire, Inc. He moved to Switzerland in 1945 and acted as European editor for *Esquire* and *Coronet*. Seven years later he came back to America and resumed editorial direction of *Esquire* as publisher.

Mark Harris

was born at Mount Vernon, New York, in 1922. He graduated in 1940 from A. B. Davis High School there, did a hitch in the Army (1943-44), and attended Clemson College, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Denver where he took his B. A. and M. A. He has been a newspaper reporter in New York, St. Louis, and Albuquerque. From 1951 to 1954 he was a teacher at the University of Minnesota, where he took a Ph. D., his dissertation being *Randolph Bourne: A Study in Immiscibility*. Now he is an assistant professor at San Francisco State College. His novels are: *Trumpet to the World* (1946), *City of Discontent* (1952), *The Southpaw* (1953), *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1956), *A Ticket for a Seamstitch* and *Something about a Soldier* (both 1957), and *Wake Up, Stupid* (1959).

Dwight Macdonald

was born at New York City in 1906, and received his formal education at Phillips Exeter Academy and at Yale University, where he was editor of *The Yale Record* and managing editor of the *Yale Literary Magazine*. Since graduation from Yale in 1928, most of his time has been devoted to magazine work, as staff writer for *Fortune*, an editor of *Partisan Review*, and editor, publisher, and chief contributor to *Politics*. In 1951 he became a regular staff writer for *The New Yorker*, and during 1956-57 acted as advisory editor to *Encounter* in England. He has published five books: *Henry Wallace, the Man and the Myth* (1948), *The Root is Man* (1953), *The Ford Foundation, the Men and the Millions* (1956), *The Responsibility of Peoples* (1957), and *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1957). Lately, he has been the Christian Gauss Lecturer at Princeton University, and is at work on two books, one on mass culture and the other an anthology of literary parodies.

Norman Mailer

was born at Long Branch, New Jersey in 1923. At the age of four, he moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he graduated from Boys High School. In 1939 he went to Harvard College, where he began to write fiction. His story "The Greatest Thing in the World" won the *Story* magazine college contest in 1941. He took his B. A. from Harvard in 1943, and wrote his first novel, *A Transit to Narcissus*, which he could not get accepted by a publisher. The following year he was in the army; eighteen months of his stretch were spent in the Philippines and Japan. Discharged in 1946, he wrote *The Naked and the Dead* within the next fifteen months. The following year he spent in France, doing graduate study at the Sorbonne and traveling. In 1951 his novel *Barbary Shore* was published, and two others have followed since: *The Deer Park* (1955) and *The White Negro* (1958). His articles and stories have appeared in the New York *Post*, *New World Writing*, *Partisan Review*, *Esquire*, and *Dissent*, and he has written a column for *The Village Voice*. His latest book, just published, is *Advertisements for Myself*, a collection of short works with autobiographical comment.

First Session

Friday evening, December 4, 1959, 8:30 o'clock

Speakers
DWIGHT MACDONALD
MARK HARRIS

Discussion Panel
NORMAN MAILER
RALPH ELLISON

Moderator
ARNOLD GINGRICH

Second Session

Saturday afternoon, December 5, 1959, 2 o'clock

Speakers
NORMAN MAILER
RALPH ELLISON

Discussion Panel
DWIGHT MACDONALD
MARK HARRIS

Moderator
PAUL ENGLE

Summary by the Moderators

Set up in Perpetua, Arrighi, and Centaur types and printed by Harry Duncan at the Journalism Typographic Laboratory. The cut on the first page is from a drawing by Norman Baasch.

The *Esquire* Symposium

This is the second symposium on the condition of the writer in America to be sponsored by Esquire. *Columbia University held the first in 1958. The general theme of this year's symposium is* THE WRITER IN A MASS CULTURE. *Four distinct statements of the problem will be made by four widely published writers who have faced the constant issues of art and the market place.*

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
Macbride Auditorium, Iowa City

THE POSITION OF THE WRITER IN AMERICA TODAY

The Writer in a Mass Culture

a symposium sponsored by Esquire Magazine

and the

State University of Iowa

PROGRAM

Friday, December 4, 8:30 p.m.

Speakers: Dwight MacDonald
Mark Harris

Moderator: Arnold Gingrich

Panel: Ralph Ellison
Norman Mailer

Saturday, December 5, 2 p.m.

Speakers: Norman Mailer
Ralph Ellison

Moderator: Paul Engle

Panel: Mark Harris
Dwight MacDonald

Summary of the Symposium: Arnold Gingrich
Paul Engle

BOTH SESSIONS WILL BE HELD IN MACBRIDE AUDITORIUM, MACBRIDE HALL,

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

* * *

A limited number of over-night accommodations are available. Write Dr. William D. Coder, Extension Division, East Hall, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, or call him at 8-0511, x2691.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA -1959- NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE
10 Old Capitol, Iowa City Phone 8-0511, X2661

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Esquire Magazine and SUI to co-sponsor writers' symposium)

IOWA CITY, IOWA, June 30 -- Top American writers will talk for two-and-a-half days at The State University of Iowa in December during a literary symposium to be organized and moderated by Arnold Gingrich, publisher of Esquire Magazine, and Professor Paul Engle, director of the widely-known SUI Writers' Workshop.

The symposium on "The Role of the Writer in America," co-sponsored by Esquire and SUI, will include addresses by leading writers and a number of panel discussions. The event will be open to the public, as well as to SUI students, free of charge.

"It is significant that SUI was chosen for the symposium. Such ventures are usually held in New York," Professor Engle said.

"The speakers will be persons deeply involved in the mainstreams of modern literary thought and activity," Engle explained. Names of symposium speakers will be announced later.

Esquire Magazine and SUI are both active in developing new writers. During its 26-year history Esquire has consistently published the work of new authors, many of whom have ultimately achieved literary fame. Contributors to the magazine have included 13 Nobel Prize winners.

The SUI Writers' Workshop has become an international center for young writers and poets. "We feel we have a major responsibility to encourage fine writing at its source, the college campus," said Esquire editor-publisher Gingrich. "In addition, we believe that events of this caliber do much to focus public attention on the significance and problems of the American writer and poet."

In 1958 Esquire jointly sponsored a similar event at Columbia University in New York, N.Y. Noted writers Dorothy Parker, Saul Bellow, Leslie Fiedler and Wright Morris spoke to more than 2,000 writers and students during the New York symposium.

- 30 -

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA -6/30/59- NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE
10 Old Capitol, Iowa City Phone 8-0511, X2661

ADD to "Esquire Magazine and SUI to co-sponsor writers' symposium"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The ~~author~~ of a novel and eight volumes of poetry, Professor Engle has also written the libretto for an opera, "Western Child," and the text for a musical composition, "Requiem," both by Professor Philip Bezanson of SUI.

Professor Engle has written widely also for nationally circulated popular magazines, as well as for literary publications. He is the author of articles in the July issues of Reader's Digest and the magazine Holiday.

The Reader's Digest feature, "That Old-Time Fourth of July," is sub-titled "A lament for the vanished day that wasn't 'safe and sane' but was gloriously exciting." It gives a nostalgic description of the Fourth of his boyhood. The article appeared originally in the July, 1958, issue of Better Homes and Gardens.

The current Holiday article is titled "When It's Think Time in the Rockies" and describes the Aspen, Colorado, Institute for Humanistic Studies, which draws many business executives annually to the Western resort for a different kind of "vacation," which the author calls "a lively session with the eggheads."

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA -1959- NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE
10 Old Capitol, Iowa City Phone 8-0511, X2661

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(4 noted writers to participate in SUI-Esquire literary symposium)

IOWA CITY, IOWA, Nov. 17 -- Four noted American writers will participate in a literary symposium at The State University of Iowa Dec. 4-5.

Norman Mailer, author of "The Naked and the Dead"; Ralph Ellison, author of "Invisible Man"; Mark Harris, author of "Bang the Drum Slowly," and Dwight Macdonald, staff writer for The New Yorker, will take part in the symposium sponsored by SUI and Esquire Magazine.

Poet Paul Engle, director of the internationally famous SUI Writers Workshop, and Arnold Gingrich, editor-publisher of Esquire, will moderate sessions of the conference to be held at 8:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 4, and at 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5.

The men will discuss "The Writer in a Mass Culture" at the two-day symposium, which will be open to the public free of charge.

Mailer wrote the best seller "The Naked and the Dead" in the fifteen months following his discharge from the Army in 1946. Since then four other books by Mailer have been published--"Barbary Shore," "The Deer Park," "The White Negro," and "Advertisements for Myself."

Ralph Ellison's first novel, "Invisible Man," was published in 1952 and received the National Book Award in 1953. He is presently working on a new novel which, as yet, has no title. Part of the novel is scheduled to appear in January in a new magazine to be called The Nobel Savage.

Mark Harris' novels include "Trumpet to the World," "City of Discontent," "The Southpaw," "Bang the Drum Slowly," "Something About a Soldier" and "Wake Up, Stupid."

"Wake Up, Stupid," published in July, 1959, has been on the New York Times list of "Books to Watch." It is a satire in the form of correspondence "revealing modern man in all his aspects."

Dwight Macdonald has been a staff writer on Fortune Magazine, editor of Partisan Review, editor of Politics, and since 1951 a staff writer for The New Yorker.

- 30 -

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA -1959- NEWS AND INFORMATION SERVICE
10 Old Capitol, Iowa City Phone 8-0511, X2661

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(local students and faculty to attend SUI literary symposium)

IOWA CITY, IOWA, Nov. 18 -- Students and faculty members from (your college) are expected to attend sessions of a two-day literary symposium at The State University of Iowa December 4-5. They include (see note at end of story).

Noted American authors who will participate in the symposium are Norman Mailer, author of "The Naked and the Dead;" Ralph Ellison, author of "Invisible Man;" Mark Harris, author of "Bang the Drum Slowly;" and Dwight Macdonald, staff writer for The New Yorker. The two-day literary symposium sponsored by SUI and Esquire Magazine.

Poet Paul Engle, director of the internationally famous SUI Writers Workshop, and Arnold Gingrich, editor-publisher of Esquire, will moderate sessions of the conference to be held at 8:30 p.m., Friday, Dec. 4, and at 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5. The symposium is open to the public free of charge.

"We feel we have a major responsibility to encourage fine writing at its source, the college campus," Gingrich said. Engle added, "It is significant that SUI was chosen for the symposium. Such ventures are usually held in New York."

Fourteen students, two faculty members, and five former students of the Writers Workshop have had novels, short stories and poetry published during the last year. Engle's ninth book of poetry "Poems in Praise" is just off the press at Random House.

Writers at the SUI symposium will discuss "The Writer in a Mass Culture." It is the second in an annual series under the direction of Esquire Magazine to investigate "The Position of the Writer in America Today."

"There are some who feel that Norman Mailer has done nothing of value since 'The Naked and the Dead;' there are others who believe that Mailer is the most powerful American writer of our time," Walter Minton, president of G.P. Putnam's Sons, says in the jacket of Mailer's new book, "Advertisements for Myself."

(more)

THE POSITION OF THE WRITER IN AMERICA TODAY

The Writer in a Mass Culture

A Symposium

December 4-5, 1959
State University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Sponsored by

Esquire Magazine
State University of Iowa

Guest Participants

Ralph Ellison

Mark Harris

Dwight Macdonald

Norman Mailer

Moderators

Arnold Gingrich
Publisher-Editor, Esquire Magazine

Paul Engle
Director, Writers' Workshop
State University of Iowa

THE POSITION OF THE WRITER IN AMERICA TODAY
The Writer in a Mass Culture

A symposium sponsored by Esquire Magazine and the State University of Iowa
December 4-5, 1959, State University of Iowa

Friday, December 4, 1959

ENGLE: I am delighted to inform you that a symposium in classical Greece meant literally "a place for drinking together." This is a modern symposium in the State of Iowa. I can only sympathize.

The magazine Esquire has welcomed a very great many writers from the University of Iowa, and so it is perfectly right that tonight the University of Iowa should welcome Esquire to this campus. The magazine is represented by three of its staff members--Arnold Gingrich, the publisher and editor; Rust Hills, fiction editor; and Gene Lichtenstein, the associate fiction editor.

The panel on my left has been rigged. This is a completely dishonest performance which we have been requested to announce in advance. The panel members have been seen talking together; they have been seen eating together; and worse. The subject for tonight, I am sure, they have talked to each other about. They are prepared to knife each other and in a few cases to slit their own throats.

In charge this evening will be Arnold Gingrich. He has had one of the most distinguished careers as an editor and publisher in the United States. He is responsible for the fact that his magazines have published more distinguished writers of fiction than any other. When Sir Charles Snow was in this country last year, he said, "There are no short story writers in England today. One reason is that there is no market for them." We are all grateful that Esquire continues to afford a very good market for the very good short story. Mr. Gingrich is also, I would guess, the only American editor who has ever delivered a lecture at the Sorbonne in French. Tonight he is going to address you in English.

GINGRICH: Esquire appreciates very much this opportunity to present four writers we admire and particularly to be doing so under the auspices of one of our most admired institutions--the Writers' Workshop of the State University of Iowa. Tonight is in effect a second round--a continuation of the symposium subject begun last year at Columbia University where we presented Dorothy Parker, Saul Bellow, Wright Morris, and Leslie Fiedler discussing the role and the function of the writer in America today. Tonight we are presenting, in the order of their appearance, Mark Harris, Dwight Macdonald, Norman Mailer, and Ralph Ellison. In tonight's session, Mr. Harris and Mr. Macdonald will be making the speeches and Mr. Mailer and Mr. Ellison will be acting as panelists for discussion of their ideas following the delivery of the speeches. Tomorrow these roles will be exactly reversed with Mr. Mailer and Mr. Ellison giving the speeches and Mr. Harris and Mr. Macdonald serving as the panelists.

Not to replay the whole thing, but to just bring you very briefly up to date, I'll give you a word or two about the symposium last year. Saul Bellow said, in effect, that with all the grants-in-aid and all the endowments,

academic and otherwise, that never before has the writer in America had it so good. Wright Morris was inclined to go along with this, but said that in spite of never having had it so good, never was the writer in America so much ignored. He used the term "mindless society", which insists on getting all its ideas packaged and predigested; which prefers to read reviews rather than read books. Leslie Fiedler, carrying on from that point, said the first duty of the writer is to bite the hand that feeds him. The first time the writer says "yes" he is already by that very token beginning to lie a little. At this point, Miss Parker, in a very small and sweet voice, said that she wished to remind both the panel and the audience that in her opinion the role of the writer was to write and to stop putting on airs about being a writer.

As was the case last year, after the four expressions of opinion here on the stage, we will within the limits of time available throw the discussion open to questions from the floor. And if I seem to emphasize that word "questions", I am just showing you my scars from last year, because never has the eagerness of speakers on the platform to make speeches been so greatly exceeded as last year at Columbia where everybody, instead of asking a question, insisted on mounting a soap box. We tried every way to get them put into the form of questions and it was very difficult. We finally had yells from the gallery, "Man, don't you know where you are? This is Columbia. You are abridging the freedom of speech." This is one thing Esquire had never been accused of before. So I am putting you on alert, as it were, to say that your time will come to address a reasonably specific question, but please in the form of a question, and not with a statement.

Our first speaker, Mark Harris, has written a very provocative statement that seems somewhat germane to the subject under discussion tonight and I quote: "I write; let the reader learn to read. I will talk baby talk to babies or dog talk to dogs, but I cannot in baby talk or in dog talk express the excitement of being an adult human being in a world so wondrous with loyalty and defeat, with sorrow and despair, and anguish." Mark Harris----

HARRIS: I'll begin platitudinously by saying that I'm very pleased to be here in what the politicians would call "the great State of Iowa." As a Californian, I think we know a little bit about Iowans. It's widely said that a large percentage of our population, particularly in the southern sector of the state, is composed of people from Iowa.

The title of my talk is "What about the 'Rigged Book Show?'" To begin with, let me apologize for reading what I have to say, instead of saying what I have to say. I know it's not nice. I'm told by a teacher of speech that I should stand before you, my eyes meeting yours (eye contact, he calls it), but the fact is that if I think too much about my eye contact, I shall be thinking too little about mind contact. I am here to say--not to look. My object ought to be, just as the object of literature ought to be, to say what ought to be said, not merely to make a gracious appearance.

Is it better to read a speech or to speak a speech? What is the object of literature? Is eye contact desirable? These days there is so much quibbling, yet I suppose nothing can put an end to quibbling. To begin with, we are not only Americans who began by quibbling with the tax people over tea, but we are also--we who are here at this moment--of a bookish, verbal, more

or less literary turn of mind. We would rather read the labels on the jelly jars at breakfast than read nothing at all at breakfast.

On the other hand, most Americans would rather eat than read. They are what we call our "mass audience." For in fact, they do read things--especially things called to their attention through advertising, which they therefore feel compelled to read because not to read what everybody is reading is "bad form." It makes you feel peculiar and you don't want that. You already feel peculiar enough without having had the good fortune to encounter books which tell you in effect--go ahead and feel peculiar, all the best people have always been peculiar. Or they may read in order to learn to play golf better, or they may read to learn how to become rich, although you and I could have told them that the way to get rich is not to sit home reading but to get out of the house and start stirring up some money.

In any case, these people are not quibblers. You and I are quibblers. Even as I read this to you, you're quibbling with it. You wouldn't have used this word or that. I quibbled with it when I wrote it, and I'm quibbling with it this very second. Am I headed in the right direction? Perhaps I should have taken the other side of the argument. Everything I say sounds doubtful. It is this penchant for quibbling which has lead someone to observe that no manuscript is ever completed--it is only abandoned. You and I quibble over the definitions of things. We are always running to our dictionaries, and most of us own more than one, you may be sure. Yet my mother, who is not a quibbler, but a mass audience, finds quite satisfactory one small dictionary--hardly bigger than a TV Guide. We, you and I, are always looking things up; we are always worried, and it is right that we should insist upon being as exact as possible. The whole world depends for its safety upon American scholarship. Yet there are points at which our quibbling may properly cease. Let us allow both "it is I" and "it is me," at least in our informal moments. Let us declare that we may or may not place a comma before the conjunction introducing the third item of a series. Let us declare once and forever (may my mother's God forgive me for speaking ill of the dead) once and forever, without support, without documentation, without scientific proof, but just because we feel it to be so, that Edgar Guest was never a poet.

Now that we've had a little practice in dogmatism, now that, so to speak, we've warmed up a little to it, let us consider several larger propositions, less agreeable to our hopeful, optomistic, idealist, democratic American sense. To wit: and this is the principal point I'm trying to make--let us no longer quibble over the question of whether the masses of our countrymen can receive or appreciate literature of the first rank. The fact is that they cannot. Art and mass distribution are simply incompatable. The writer has no business reaching for a mass audience and the serious reader has no business distracting the writer by discussing with him possible methods of bridging the gulf between the writer and the mass--it cannot be bridged.

In short, there are things I cannot discuss with my mother; ways in which I cannot reach her. She gave me the world, and within limits, I display my gratitude--only today I dropped her a postcard. But beyond this, at least in the regions of literature, in areas of feeling and vision, we cannot travel together. It was my mother's dream, it still is, it was my boyhood dream, and it has always been our national American dream, to achieve a unity of

spirit among all men. We accomplished so much together; came so far together, in so many ways succeeded, that it has become difficult for us to accustom ourselves to the possibility that in certain areas we must confess failure.

At this point, I meet your eyes with mine. I make eye contact. I see that we are all agreed, and that what we next wish to know is "Why won't the illusion die?" You say, if we are engaged in an endeavor which is futile, then aren't we behaving in ways which are confusing and dangerous, perhaps even ultimately fatal to the development of literature in the United States. I agree with you; so we are, and now you have forced me to describe, if I can, ways in which we are blindly applying, or misapplying, certain historical assumptions to contemporary literary procedures. After that, for an American quibbler is never happy without a plan, I shall offer a few proposals; and after that, with a final eye contact, I shall be done.

Quantity has always been on the upswing in these States. In general, more has meant better. After the quibble over rates upon tea, we were 13 states, but this we considered cramped and unlucky. Therefore, we added to ourselves, at last completing ourselves at 50. The opponents of expansion were never the more energetic elements of our population and, obviously they were never the numerical majority. They were either the defenders of a feudalistic plantation system, or at the end, as in the recent case of Hawaii, they were those somewhat sluggish folk who just didn't want to invite into our union "all those cotton-pickin' oriental-types."

Every few seconds our population exceeds itself. We are always setting new records. I think to myself, the more the better. For it is well to value life in the abstract since we then value it in the particular. I feel safest in a nation where each particular life is valued, and I think that this humane item of our national philosophy ought to be advertised throughout the globe. As we expanded in size and number, we expanded our insistence upon individual dignity. Whereas, you once had to be male and white to vote, you may now in most places be female and brown. We assert the right to be decently housed and decently fed, decently medicated, decently educated, decently protected against oppressive employment, decently insured against old age. Benefits formerly reserved for the few are now available to the many. Of course, we have known that size and number cannot be all. Our most sensitive critics have been at us with questions. Now that everyone votes--whom do you elect? Now everyone is unionized, but what has happened to the quality of the labor you produce? We cannot always reply happily. We know, for example, that the protected worker often looks upon his labor ~~but~~ not as if it were an increment to his life, but as it were his life's enemy. (if)

Now that every man except the most indolent, or like myself, the most hypercritical, owns an automobile, what does he really have? Is its quality as obvious as its frequency, or is the 300-horsepower American automobile really a partner to the very deficiencies of the preponderant bulk of American fiction? Both lack subtlety, both lack economy--who needs 300 horses to drag him about the street--both are overdecorated, overpriced, unequal to the advertising claims made for them; unrealistic, purchased for reasons remote from their function, short-lived, dangerous, impossible to repair, and their engines are in the wrong place.

Now the men and women responsible for both automobiles and books have this in common: They have for so long defended their product that they have come to believe in their own defenses. For I meet an author and a publisher who have together perpetrated a very bad book, and I tell them that I wish they hadn't and that I hope they won't again, that I think they have done a very unpatriotic thing, they reply as if I were being merely playful, "You can't really mean that. Look how many people bought it; look how much money we all made from it; the good reviews it had. Why it's going to be made into a moving picture as soon as the television series is completed." They aren't being cynical. They aren't laughing all the way to the bank; they're worrying all the way to the bank. They're honestly disturbed. If they are too disturbed, they quit the business. But if they remain in the business they must learn to avoid the terrible panic that comes with discovering that you are in a high place upon a weak foundation, that you are in danger of suddenly finding yourself deprived of the important conviction that all these years you have been doing not only well, but good. So you call "well" and "good" the same, or in an American context, you learn to equate the idea of "wellness"--quality--with the idea of"goodness"--quantity--or perhaps it's the other way around. You have said, we will take all things to the people, among these shall be art. When, instead of art, we take only quantity, it is easy to say, once we have learned to call "well" by the name of "good," or "good" by the name of "well," it is easy to say, let us simply call "art" by the name of "quantity," or "quantity" by the name of "art." Change the terms, change the names of things. After a while nobody will notice. By 1984 everything will be under control. When you make the mistake of transforming an idea of popular government into an idea of popular literature, you have failed to observe that whereas it is the intention of democratic government to respond to the desire of the majority, this has never been, is not, and can never be the intention of literature. Literature is not a consumer item like automobiles. It is not a form of organization, like government. Government is not an end in itself, but literature is. The purpose of government is to preserve tranquility so that we may carry forward the uplifting labor of artistic life.

I know that you now insist upon hearing my proposals. First, there ought to be an overall reduction of the quantity of books published. This would reduce the size of editorial and sales forces, which would be momentarily, individually, humanly unfortunate, but it is precisely this necessity to sustain, perpetuate, and even increase its own size, which has forced publishers to issue more and more bad books. It may be argued that even when quantity is reduced, publishers will continue to manufacture the same discouraging ratio of bad books to good, but other proposals exist to avert this danger.

Two: Penalties for false advertising. For example, the relationship between commentator and book ought to be clarified. When, for example, Mr. Bennett Cerf endorses a Random House book, when he is presented as if he were a mere passerby at the bookstall, we become appalled by this spectacle of deception, for Mr. Cerf, as most of you seem to know, far from being a "Random" reader, is head of the "House."

Three: Aid and encouragement for non-profit presses--usually, university presses, whose basic intention is not to return profit, but to preserve for mankind art and data which mankind truly needs. Who is to make decisions regarding the truly useful? In general, the scholar. This smacks, does it, of ex parte, of snobism and elitism? But the alternative, the so-called common reader or the businessman, is by no means so desirable. Nowhere except in the field of literature do we blithely entitle every man to an opinion. I am not permitted to stand beside the surgeon and then to rush from the operating room to write a review of his style. Bridge builders, plumbers, airplane pilots, everyone except the writer is exempt from the craze for amateur participation.

Four: The entry of wealthy foundations into the business of subsidizing both publishers and writers. Why must we demand that the publisher and writer show a financial profit? Why not assist them in the way we assist hospitals, opera companies, schools, and colleges? A spokesman for the Ford Foundation said earlier this week, "The theater in the United States has for too long been thought of as either commerce or entertainment. The Foundation's action in awarding a grant of $559,000 to four so-called 'little theaters' demonstrates its conviction that the theater in America is a cultural rather than a commercial resource." Our imagination may easily substitute the idea of publishers and authors for the idea of theaters.

Five, and this is the last: I propose the creation of a bureau of pure books and standards, whose role would be not censorship nor repression, but education and clarification. This would be principally toward the end of acquainting the public with possible means of distinguishing between the language of commerce and the language of literary sincerity. It would attempt to deepen our awareness of the existence of a vast conspiracy of enthusiasm--that pragmatic army of publishers, authors, reviewers, and editors of journals of review who are daily engaged in the process of mutually reassuring each other that doing "good" and doing "well" are synonymous. The world of publishing is infected with nepotism and overlapping directorates. There is a traffic in gifts and bribes between, on one hand the manufacturers of books, and upon the other, allegedly objective reviewers. And certainly one of the tasks of the bureau of pure books and standards would be to teach us the difference between reviewer and critic. The bureau would also teach us to distinguish between a true book and an inventive book. That is, between a book written because of an author's real desire to illuminate us, and a book concocted for commercial gain only--usually at the instigation of a publisher, and often in noxious collusion with a motion picture studio. In this connection, I cannot resist urging this bureau to maintain surveillance of magazines purporting to teach the craft of writing and to scrutinize for fraud every advertisement therein. I do not know of anything more demoralizing than this wicked trade in which relatively illiterate men and women presume to prepare innocent young people for the literary life. Those are the end of my proposals.

If we come to insist upon the reliability of our published information, we may soon come to know enough of both patience and philosophy to exist amiably as readers of good books in an American democracy whose popular arts are very diverse, salutary, relaxing, amusing, and useful but seldom literary. The more difficult arts remain the wards of the few. Let us not be distressed.